



FEMA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

NEW ELIAS BROOKINGS SCHOOL SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS FEMA-DR-1994-MA

As a result of damages sustained on June 1, 2011, when tornadoes struck portions of Western Massachusetts, including the City of Springfield, the President declared a major disaster for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. This major disaster declaration, referenced as FEMA-1994-DR-MA, authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide Public Assistance to local governments, state agencies and eligible private non-profit organizations in Massachusetts.

The City of Springfield, Massachusetts applied to the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) program for aid as a result of damages sustained by the Elias Brookings Elementary School (referred to herein as the Brookings School) on Hancock Street. The Brookings School incurred significant damages from the tornado, rendering it uninhabitable for its intended purpose. In addition, the existing school building configuration cannot provide the required educational space needs without expansion because the existing facility falls short of the school's educational needs by over 15,000 SF, expansion is infeasible on the current site, and renovation costs would be close to 70% of the costs associated with new construction of an adequate facility.

The City of Springfield investigated options to establish a permanent school for the Brookings School students that will provide a safe and accessible learning environment meeting Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) requirements for educational space, site construction standards, and other requirements, and meeting all applicable safety and fire codes, seismic standards, and building codes. The City is seeking partial funding at the state level from MSBA and at the federal level from FEMA for the construction of a permanent Brookings School building on four (4) acres roughly bound by five city streets - Hickory Street to the south, Walnut Street and Walnut Street Extension to the west, Marshall Street to the north and Melrose Street to the east.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10), FEMA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to meet their responsibilities under NEPA to fully understand and consider the environmental consequences of actions proposed for federal funding. The purpose of the EA is to analyze potential environmental impacts from the proposed project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In the EA process, three (3) alternatives were considered: the No Action Alternative, leaving the Brookings School in its current condition; the Proposed Action Alternative, to construct a new Elias Brookings School in the City of Springfield, on Walnut

Street; and the Rehabilitation of Existing School Alternative, repairing the school to its pre-disaster function, updating it to present codes and standards.

FEMA evaluated the proposed project for any potential significant adverse impacts to existing physical resources (noise, air quality, public services and utilities, transportation/traffic, aesthetic and visual resources, and historic and cultural resources), natural resources (geology and soils, water resources, coastal zone, floodplains, wild and scenic rivers, wildlife, vegetation, threatened and endangered species, and wetlands), socioeconomic resources (zoning and land use, human health and safety, and economic justice), and cumulative impacts.

These documents were made available for viewing at the City of Springfield Office of Procurement located at Springfield City Hall, 36 Court Street Room 307, Springfield, MA 01103, Monday through Friday 8:15AM-4:30 PM.

CONDITIONS

The City of Springfield (the City) shall comply with all prescribed conditions set forth in the EA, including, but not limited to the following conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

1. The City or its designees are responsible for obtaining and complying with all required local, state, and federal permits and approvals. Permits required for this project include: Local Site Plan Review; an application for discontinuance of a portion of Melrose Street; various City permits; a Street Occupancy Permit, Street Opening Permit, Trenching Permit, Driveway/Curb Cut Permit, and other miscellaneous permits from Springfield Department of Public Works (DPW); Water and Sewer Service approvals; a Project Notification Form (response letter already received); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Construction General Permit (CGP) [Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) has been prepared – Owner and Contractor will need to file for permit coverage].
2. Construction vehicles and equipment will be stored on site during the project. All construction activities will be performed using qualified personnel and in accordance with the standards specified in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Appropriate signage will be posted onsite and in the vicinity.
3. Construction will take place only during normal business hours and all equipment will meet local, state, and federal noise regulations. Idling time shall be limited onsite. Fugitive dust shall be limited by wetting during construction and sediment and erosion controls shall be installed and maintained, in accordance with the CGP and SWPPP.
4. The City or its designees shall manage and dispose of excavated soils and waste materials in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. If hazardous/contaminated materials are discovered during construction, the work shall cease until the City can implement appropriate procedures and secure additional permits if needed.

5. If human remains are discovered during the course of project implementation, the City or its designee shall immediately stop construction activities in the vicinity of the discovery and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm until FEMA concludes consultation with the City, MSBA, the State Historic Preservation Office, and applicable Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. These parties shall consult to determine the appropriate course of action and disposition of remains in accordance with applicable local, state, federal and tribal regulations.
6. The City shall notify FEMA and MSBA should the scope of work change, including substantial design changes, additional ground disturbance, further vegetation removal, or other unanticipated changes to the physical environment.

FINDINGS

Based on input and consultation with agencies, identified sources documented in the EA, City officials, and in accordance with the FEMA regulations for environmental considerations and Executive Orders on Floodplains, Wetlands, and Environmental Justice, FEMA finds that the Proposed Alternative, as defined in the EA, will have no significant impact on the natural or human environment. As a result of this Finding of No Significant Impact, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed project with prescribed conditions may proceed. If a change in the scope of work occurs, MSBA and FEMA must be notified to evaluate if the proposed change would alter the potential impacts on the environment. Under most situations, however, the modification or addition of one or more elements of the construction plan will not alter the findings of this EA.

APPROVED:

Jack Sullivan	Date
Regional Environmental Officer	
FEMA Region 1	